Agricultural Export

751. DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI :
SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are providing any financial assistance to the State Governments to boost the export of agricultural produce;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether only 400 crore rupees have been spent out of the plan outlay of Rupees 1000 crores to improve the agricultural export;

(d) if so, the reasons and justification thereof; and

(e) the details of steps/action plan initiated by the Government to boost the export of agricultural produce?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) No, Sir. Government does not provide any financial assistance to State govts. specifically to boost export of agricultural produce.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). There is no separate allocation to improve agricultural export, the thrust however is to achieve higher levels of production.

(e) To boost the export of agricultural produce Government has taken a number of steps viz. simplification of inspection procedures, removal of quantity restrictions on some items, concessonal credit, product development to meet international standards, extension of benefits under the scheme of 100% export oriented units/export processing zones to agricultural sector, air freight subsidy on selected floricultural/ horticulrural/fresh vegetables to specified destinations, provision of cold storage at airports, financial assistance to exporters under various schemes, participation in international trade fairs, arranging buyers-sellers meetings, organising market development compaigns, improving packaging and quality certification. The National Horticulture Board provides assistance for marketing, handling, processing and infrastructural facilities for domestic and export markets.

Selling of Adopted Children

752. PROF. AJIT KUMAR MEHTA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of India asked to State Government of Orissa for a report on the alleged involvement of Basundhara, a voluntary organisation in selling of children in the name of adoption;

(b) if so, the details of the report submitted by the State Government in this regard; and

(c) the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government of India in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) to (c). This Ministry has received a number of complaints and allegations from senior citizens of Cuttack as well as MLAs of Orissa Government stating that the organisation Basundhara is involved in malafide activities which inter-alia relate to selling of children in name of adoption. The State Commission for Women had also asked for investigation of the activities of placement agencies in Orissa including that of Basundhara. The Government has contacted the appropriate authorities under the Government of India to conduct an investigation of the activities of this organisation and submit a report which is awaited. The State Government has not been asked to submit a report. However they have been informed of the action taken by this Ministry.

Late Arrival of Monsoon

753. SHRI HARIN PATHAK : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the late monsoon has adversely affected the Kharif crop particularly the staple crops like Bajra, Jowar and pulses such as Urad and Moong;

(b) if so, the extent thereof;

(c) whether due to dry spell the crop has also been affected in the Western Maharashtra particularly in Nasik, Ahmednagar and Pune districts in Aurangabad; and

(d) if so, the extent thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Question does not arise.

(c) and (d). Due to dry spells, the growth and development of crop was affected to some extent initially but the crops recovered later on by favourable weather conditions. The production is likely to be better than last Kharif season.

[Translation]

Inter State Council

754. SHRI N.J. RATHWA :
SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV :
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN :
SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA :
SHRI D.P. YADAV :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the sittings of Inter-State Council held so far and the suggestions made thereof;

(b) the details of the suggestions/requests made by the Chief Ministers which were accepted/rejected by the Government alongwith the suggestions/requests proposed to be taken into consideration:

(c) the time by which a final decision to implement these suggestions/requests is likely to be taken:

(d) the reasons for the delay in taking a final decision in this regard:

(e) whether any high level committees has also been set up to review the recommendations made by Sarkaria Commission in respect of the Centre-State relationship:

(f) if so, whether the Committee have submitted its report: and

(g) if not, the reasons for the delay in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (g). So far two meetings of the Inter-State Council have been held. The first meeting was held on 10th October, 1996 and the second meeting on 15th October, 1996. The Council, in its first meeting, decided to set up a Sub-Committee to examine the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations and also to consider wider aspects of Centre-State relations. The report of the Sub-Committee was to be considered at the next meeting of the Inter-State Council.

The Inter-State Council, in its second meeting, took note of the work of the Sub-Committee, particularly the 179 recommendations finalised by it. While it broadly endorsed the recommendations of the Sub-Committee, it also decided that in view of the reservations expressed by some of the Chief Ministers, the State Governments may send their views on any matter of relevance, including the 179 recommendations finalised by the Sub-Committee, to the Inter-State Council Secretariat so that their views can be further considered by the Standing Committee of the Council proposed to be constituted. The Constitution of the Standing Committee is under consideration.

The Standing Committee would also review and update the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, especially the vital question of devolution of financial powers from the Central Government to the State Governments and the examination of changes required in article 356 of the Constitution of India. The Committee will be required to give its report within three months and the same will be considered thereafter by the Council. The recommendations of the Inter-State Council will be sent to the Government for consideration and a final decision.

In view of the recommendations of the Inter-State Council to constitute a Standing Committee, the proposal to constitute a High Level Committee stands dropped.

Gobbling of Old Age Pension

755. SHRI JAGAT VIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware about the incidents of gobbling up of old age pension of poor dalits in village Kegha of Kalyanpur Development block of Kanpur (U.P.):

(b) if so, whether the Government had asked to conduct an inquiry in the matter:

(c) if so, the result thereof: and

(d) the action taken against the culprits?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA) : (a) to (d). The Government is not aware of any incident of Gobbling of funds released as Old Age Pension under National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) to the State of U.P. as such and to village Kegha of Kalyanpur Development Block of Kanpur District.

[English]

Misuse of Funds by M.C.D

756. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have received suggestions/requests from some hon'ble Members of Parliament from July 1, 1996 till date for making probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation into the increase in crimes in Delhi and misuse of funds by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi;

(b) whether such suggestions or memoranda have also been received from certain social organisations of Delhi;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the Union Government have ordered or proposed to order for conducting probe into the said matters by the Central Bureau of Investigations;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (f). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Assistance for Natural Calamities

757. SHRI S.D.N.R. WADIYAR :
SHRI TARA CHAND BHAGORA :
SHRI GANGA CHARAN RAJPUT :
SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA :
SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the amount allocated to each State to deal with